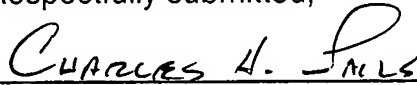


A page bearing the marked-up changes to the Specification made by the current amendment is attached hereto, and is captioned "**Marked-Up Version of Amendment to the Specification.**"

The Applicants respectfully submit that the Preliminary Amendment is properly presented in the application pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.78(a)(2) in that the Preliminary Amendment adding the claimed benefit, *i.e.*, priority, to an earlier filed patent application has been submitted within four months of the December 13, 2001, filing date of the above-referenced non-provisional patent application, and is also timely pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.115 in that this Preliminary Amendment is made for procedural reasons only, and the amendment of the specification as set out herein will not otherwise unduly interfere with the preparation of a First Office Action in the matter.

As no claims have been added to the application by this amendment, the Applicants respectfully submit that no additional fee(s) are due or otherwise result from the filing of the instant Preliminary Amendment. If, however, the Commissioner believes that a fee is due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such additional fee(s) from, or credit any fee overpayment(s) to, Deposit Account No. 14-0629.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: BOX NON-FEE AMENDMENT, Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this

27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2002

  
Jane L. Smith

April 4, 2002  
Date

**Marked-Up Version of Amendment to the Specification.**

On page 1 of the application, after the title and before the heading "Field Of The Invention," please insert the following text:

**-- CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application claims priority to provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/255,593, filed on December 13, 2000, in the United States Patent and Trademark Office. --